

Article

Postmigrant Spatial Justice? The Case of ‘Berlin Develops New Neighbourhoods’ (BENN)

Sylvana Jahre

Geography Department, Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin, 10999 Berlin, Germany; E-Mail: sylvana.jahre@geo.hu-berlin.de

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Abstract

This article discusses the introduction of a new urban policy in Berlin, Germany, in the frame of postmigrant spatial justice. In 2017, Berlin established so-called ‘integration management programs’ in 20 different neighbourhoods around large refugee shelters as a response to the growing challenges local authorities faced after the administrative collapse in 2015/16. A new policy agenda provides the opportunity to learn from previous policies and programs—especially when it is addressed to the local dimension of integration, a widely and controversially discussed issue. Drawing on fieldwork conducted in Berlin in 2018 and 2019, this article discusses how migration is framed in urban social policy against both postmigrant and spatial justice theory.

Keywords

BENN; Berlin; critical urban research; forced migration; migration policy; refugees; postmigration; social city; spatial justice

Issue

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1. Introduction

Berlin has endured turbulent years regarding forced migration and its subsequent policies. Since 2013, the increased opening of refugee shelters in Berlin and beyond has not only attracted media attention but also fuelled right-wing populist discourse. In addition, the local Berlin authorities, namely the Berlin State Office for Health and Social Affairs collapsed under the high pressure of taking in drastically increased numbers of refugees in 2015/16. This caused long waiting lines, and spontaneously built tents by voluntary organisations providing food, water, and shelter to asylum seeking persons. These local impacts are embedded in broader global processes, as the immigration of hundreds of thousands of people to Europe exposed weaknesses in the European migration regime (Hess, 2016, p. 6). The increased immigration also increased the research studies on these issues. However, studies on refugees operate in a field of tension: While the research often

intends to draw attention to the various problems and discrimination experienced by asylum-seeking people, explicitly focusing on ‘refugees’ singles these people out as a distinct group. The postmigrant perspective seeks to overcome this binary and allows for an understanding beyond migrants and non-migrants by conceptualising a migration society everyone is part of (Römhild, 2015). This article adopts this perspective for a current research project on an urban social policy programme in Berlin that is running from 2017 to 2021. The programme called BENN—‘Berlin develops new neighbourhoods’—was introduced in neighbourhoods with large refugee shelters. In total there are 20 teams working in the neighbourhoods as so-called ‘integration managements’ (Senatsverwaltung für Stadtentwicklung und Wohnen [SenSW], 2021). As an ‘integration’ programme it does not focus on the typical ‘integration policy’ measures, such as the improvement of language skills, education, or labour—instead, the BENN programme focuses on encounters. BENN is based on the idea that people with

fewer resources (e.g., refugees) are more dependent on the neighbourhood and the available resources such as self-help networks, local associations, and social organisations, or even shopping facilities and building infrastructures (Franke, Schnur, & Senkel, 2018, p. 8). This policy is therefore discussed in the context of the Just City as the ultimate goal of planning (Marcuse, 2009, p. 1). Can planning and policy interventions such as BENN bring about more social and spatial justice? Or in other words: Can the BENN programme initiate a transformation towards postmigrant spatial justice? In exploring this question, the article first introduces the broader context of the research project from which this question arises. Secondly, the article sets the theoretical basis through bringing together postmigrant theory and spatial justice theory. The analytical framework is then discussed regarding the BENN programme and the empirical findings. In the discussion, the empirical findings are linked back to the theoretical framework.

2. Context of the Research Project

This article draws on material from an ongoing research project that is interested in knowledge–power relations and the framing of migration within the field of urban social policy. The first empirical phase focused on the institutional setting and the newly introduced integration managements of the BENN programme. 19 expert interviews were conducted mainly with BENN integration managers between 2018 and 2019. This is supplemented by participatory observation; specifically, during internal Senate events and by analysing the protocols from these events. In addition, written material that focuses on ‘local integration’ was researched and analysed such as federal as well as Berlin state urban social policy documents, scientific studies, reports, and evaluations. A second empirical phase was planned but had to be postponed due to the Covid-19 pandemic crisis. The aim of this phase was to talk to people that the BENN programme wants to address, including marginal and subaltern perspectives. The already collected material can reveal institutional logics and governing processes or as Wacquant (2020, p. 17) put it:

The sociology of marginality must not fasten on vulnerable ‘groups’ (which often exist merely on paper, if that) but on the *institutional mechanisms* that produce, reproduce and transform the network of positions to which its supposed members are dispatched and attached.

The material was analysed with an open coding process (Charmaz, 2006, pp. 42) and several themes occurred regularly throughout the material. However, the postmigrant perspective is nothing that has evolved from the empirical data. It is rather a postmigrant lens through which the empirical material is analysed retrospectively.

3. At the Intersection of Postmigration and Social Justice Theory

3.1. Postmigrant Perspectives

Like many other academic concepts, postmigration does not have a fixed definition but rather includes multiple perspectives. The term ‘post-migrant’ can be used as a label for people who have not had a migration experience themselves but are nevertheless marked as migrants. In this vein, the concept serves as a means of producing counter-hegemonic knowledge, gives voice to migrants, makes marginalised types of knowledge visible, challenges national myths, reveals new concepts of difference, and generates a new awareness of history (Yildiz, 2018, p. 19). However, critics have argued that this understanding runs the risk of renewing established labels and categories (Römhild, 2015). In following on from an enhanced use of the postcolonial, Bojadžijev and Römhild (2014) propose a more radical renewal by conceiving not only migrants, but by constituting a postmigrant society. In this view, everyone is affected by migration and becomes a shaper of society (Bojadžijev & Römhild, 2014, p. 18). For Foroutan (2019, p. 19), postmigrant societies have accepted their immigration reality socially, politically and as part of their collective identities. One central aspect is dissolving the binary of natives and immigrants, of ‘us’ and ‘them’ (Mecheril, 2011), of the ‘West’ and the ‘rest’ (Hall, 1992), into an understanding of society as one of coexistence (Foroutan, 2019, p. 19). Mecheril (2014), as one of the main critics of the postmigrant concept, denounces the prefix ‘post,’ since ‘post’ rather expresses a distant perspective towards migrants. However, he acknowledges that the concept still grasps fundamental points of criticism of the way in which migration is addressed (Mecheril, 2014, p. 108). What has turned out to be a greater obstacle, though, is the translation from theory to empirical research, as the depiction of societal conditions runs the risk of falling into the trap of ‘othering’ and culturalist reduction (Dahinden, 2016; Römhild, 2015, p. 38). In this article, postmigration is less of a translation process, but rather an interpretative approach towards the new policy intervention in BENN.

3.2. Towards Postmigrant Spatial Justice

Drawing on Friedrich Engels’ study *The Condition of the Working Class in England* (1845), Kemper and Vogelpohl (2013, p. 14) stress how social relations are unstable in principle and that social dynamics are determined by crisis and conflict (Kemper & Vogelpohl, 2013, p. 15). This implies that forces to overcome an unsatisfactory situation can develop from these conditions themselves. This is what the authors regard as social transformation (Kemper & Vogelpohl, 2013, p. 15). Since the social and the spatial are inherently connected (Massey, 2007), both need to be considered for social transformation.

The BENN programme is inherently spatial by considering the following: Firstly, it is unique to the city and state of Berlin; secondly, it works with a conception of the local as neighbourhood and even carries neighbourhood in its name; and thirdly the programme is tied to the need of an existence of a refugee shelter. However, notions like neighbourhood or local can be problematic as analytical categories as they suggest an inner coherence and clearly defined boundaries. This perspective latently underestimates state power, and it reveals little about the actual relevance of certain scales (Füller & Michel, 2008, p. 8). In addition, a framing of such spaces as static and stable fixed sites runs the danger of conforming and reifying the governance structures of migration that divides space into containers and disperses migrants accordingly (Hinger, Schäfer, & Pott, 2016, p. 445). This is not to say that space is not relevant, on the contrary. An analysis of the different forms of spatial production can provide deep insights into the respective constructions of truth and reality (Roskamm, 2012, p. 186). As Wiest (2020, p. 4) has stressed, postmigrant approaches have been little discussed in the context of space despite its relevant connections. She opens many departure points on which this article ties in with. Questions of urban citizenship (Lebuhn, 2013) as well as the right to the city (Lefebvre, 1968/1996) discuss questions of participation, equal rights, and access, that have also been at the centre of questions about spatial and social justice. Spatial justice involves a conflict of interest over space at a certain time or as Philippopoulos-Mihalopoulos (2015) suggests: “To put it simply, spatial justice is the question that arises when a body desires to move into the space of another body.” For Massey, spatial justice then lays in the possibility of plurality: “When many people and multiple communities experience satisfied claims to the same singularly occupied space, then the experience of spatial justice is maximized” (Pierce, 2019, p. 10). What is regarded as satisfied claims can be further analysed through the lenses of equality, democracy, and diversity, as Fainstein (2009) has suggested. Marcuse (2009) theorizes spatial justice with an emphasis on social injustice such as unequal access to urban resources, education, and civil rights and the various spatial consequences and outcomes. In contrast to Marcuse, Soja (2009, p. 2) understands space not as an outcome, but as the primary variable determining social inequalities and argues for a distributive understanding of spatial (in)justice. The idea of the distribution of values follows Rawls (1972/2001, p. 44) question of justice, that states, if given the choice, individuals would always choose a system of equal opportunities, which prevents excessive concentrations of property and wealth. This has been criticised from a Marxist perspective, first and foremost from David Harvey. Inequality and injustice result from a capitalist mode of production, that in turn calls for a production-side account of justice rather than relying on the distributional forms of justice (Harvey, 1973). The redistributive model of spatial justice highlights that

the normal workings in the everyday of space inherent an injustice in distribution, as the “accumulation of locational decisions in a capitalist economy tends to lead to the redistribution of real income in favor of the rich over the poor” (Soja, 2009, p. 3). In this manner, socio-spatial transformation would create equality and equal distribution to achieve social and spatial justice. However, when there is not enough for everyone, how should an equal distribution play out? In Berlin, there is a shortage of affordable housing for low-income groups. Refugees in shelters that have been granted asylum and have the option to move out of the shelter often do not find affordable flats and are therefore forced to stay in the shelter. As Fainstein (2009, p. 2) explains with Nussbaum (2000, p. 135), for a society to achieve democratic deliberation, equality is fundamental. Structural differentiation, through the assignment of a certain (residence) status in combination with unequal access to housing, education, labour market, healthcare, and social welfare as it is the case between citizens and refugees, can therefore hardly be considered an equal background condition. With the introduction of deliberative concepts like communicative planning, planners are asked to listen specially to subordinated groups (Healey, 1997). Fainstein (2009, p. 2), however, points to the tension between deliberation and justice: “After deliberation people may still make choices that are harmful to themselves or to minorities” (Fainstein, 2009, p. 2). Poststructuralist and feminist scholars have also pointed to the limitations of the redistributive model and urged for a recognition of difference (Young, 2000). Justice requires not simply formal inclusion, but social relations should be central, as they differently position people and condition their experiences, opportunities, and knowledge of the society (Young, 2000, p. 83). In urban planning, the concept of diversity refers to recognition (Fainstein, 2009, p. 4) that is merely the “recognition of the other” (Fainstein, 2009, p. 5). However, as the postmigrant perspective seeks to overcome the binary between ‘we’ and ‘the other,’ recognition of diversity could be the transformation from the periphery to the centre. Migration is placed at the heart of society; everyone is affected by it and everyone is involved in shaping the postmigrant society (Römhild, 2015). However, there is another tension between equality and recognition of difference:

Recognition claims often take the form of calling attention to, if not performatively creating, the putative specificity of some group and then of affirming its value. Thus, they tend to promote group differentiation. Redistribution claims, in contrast, often call for abolishing economic arrangements that underpin group specificity. Thus, they tend to promote group dedifferentiation. The upshot is that the politics of recognition and the politics of redistribution often appear to have mutually contradictory aims. (Fraser, 1997, p. 16)

Spatial and social justice, in the way Fainstein is pushing forward through equality, democracy and diversity, reveals the many tensions and contradictions that may well clash or require trade-offs between each other and within each of these norms (Fainstein, 2009, p. 5). A transformation towards postmigrant spatial justice can therefore not fully evolve but is always connected to tensions and trade-offs; especially in the case of defining justice.

4. Shifting Historical Discourses about Participation with Regards to Migration and Asylum Seeking

Although migration to Berlin has been an issue since its founding, the focus of this article starts with the German recruitment agreements since the 1950s. West Berlin remained largely unaffected by the labour migration until 1964 with the building of the Wall and the related economic boom. In the following years, hundreds of thousands of labour migrants came to West Berlin (Seidel & Kleff, 2008, p. 29). The idea that the so-called guest workers are only staying temporarily and have no intention in long-term residence has led to a political non-acceptance of social realities, which has prevented any political discourse in West Germany for decades (Bade, 2001, p. 393). More than 20 years after the recruitment started, West Germany slowly realised that a permanent residence of the recruited workers was imminent, and the issue was given more attention. One major development in this respect is the Kühn Memorandum (1979), which is seen to mark a policy change (Rudolf, 2019, p. 26). For the first time, migration was not neglected by the West German Government, but recognised as a fact and became a local policy issue (Rudolf, 2019). The next years saw contrary developments with increased xenophobia. In contrast to West Berlin, immigration to East Berlin played a much smaller role. A noticeable shortage of workers in the German Democratic Republic (GDR) only became noticeable in the beginning of the eighties (Seidel & Kleff, 2008, p. 30). The GDR signed a bilateral agreement with Angola, Cuba, Mozambique, and Vietnam to train workers in East German enterprises as a source of cheap labour (Kil & Silver, 2006, p. 105). The workers lived in communal residences or dormitories near the factories entirely segregated from the German population and were required to receive permission for travel beyond the communal residence (Kil & Silver, 2006, p. 105). In East Germany, there was barely a discourse on equal rights and participation. In re-unified Germany, increasing (racially motivated) acts of violence against immigrants in East and West and a significant rise in unemployment forced a new debate on migration and participation at the local level. Solutions to these problems were addressed after a change of government through several political interventions such as the reform of citizenship law (2000), the establishment of an Immigration Council and the Immigration Act (2005), in which the task of integration

was enshrined in law (Filsinger, 2018, p. 318). Two implications are important here: First, through these developments, municipalities obtained a different status and authority in questions of migration and participation through the Immigration Act and the labour market policy reforms (Hartv I to IV), and the revision of municipal integration policy (Bommers, 2018, p. 108). Second, the broad consensus on the necessity of integration and state support is supplemented by the recognition that integration requires not only the performance of immigrants but also that of society (Thranhardt, 2008, p. 45). Although it could be concluded that Germany recognised to be an immigrant country in theory, migration is far from being sustainably embedded in the national self-perception or in the population (Espahangizi, 2018, p. 36). The new policies introduced a cross-disciplinary focus through pooling of resources and focusing on space resulting in the emergence of integrated urban neighbourhood development across Europe. Programmes like the Social City programme in Germany aim to serve as curative or preventive intervention in deprived neighbourhoods (Uitermark, 2014, p. 1426). The idea that the immediate living environment plays a crucial role in the activation of resources and forms of capital is also the foundation of the BENN programme. However, the developments after 2015 and the public discourse show that the previously fought struggles for recognition and rights for migrants do not apply to refugees. According to the German law, there are many different statuses for people seeking asylum, all of which carry different rights and obligations. The different legal statuses have consequences for the provisions on residence permission and access to participation measures, such as housing, language, education, labour market, and civic engagement (Aumüller, 2018). As a result, there is a gradation which divides people into hierarchical categories and which is linked to access of social resources and encounters. This separation is led by the means of different policies. Basically until 2014, the predominant position in federal politics ignored the need for participation policy measures for refugees and asylum-seekers (Aumüller, 2018, p. 181). The changes of 2014 with the implementation of a new law affect such individuals for whom the federal authorities are more likely to issue residence permits. In contrast, the new law contains many tightenings such as additional threats of sanctions or the allocation of residence (Federal Government, 2016). In Berlin, participation of refugees is regulated through the 'Overall concept for the integration and participation of refugees' (Juretzka, 2017), which was developed through a participation process of civil society, migrant organisations, self-organised refugees, NGOs and welfare associations. Although these diverse actors inscribe themselves as experts, this does not guarantee a real democratisation of the city, but needs constant negotiation (Neumann, 2019, p. 29). Berlin is part of the Solidarity City network that claims a 'city for all' and access for everyone without exception, including the illegalised and the unseen

(Neumann, 2019, p. 29). Although local efforts are made to support refugees, Berlin still operates within the national framework and barely provides a just and safe space in the sense of ‘sanctuary cities’ (Bauder, 2016).

5. BENN—‘Berlin Develops New Neighbourhoods’

5.1. General Working and Main Actors of the BENN Programme

The SenSW has fundamentally developed the BENN programme, designed the programme structure, and is responsible to monitor the activities carried out by the local integration managements. It is the central administrative and financial management actor that bundles and distributes funds. The 20 local integration managements each consist of a local office with usually two to four employed personnel located in the neighbourhood in the vicinity of a large refugee shelter. If the refugee shelter is located within an existing neighbourhood management area (from the Social City programme), the respective neighbourhood management is increased with staff and receives additional funds. Although the SenSW is the contracting authority, the members of the BENN teams are employed by various external private organisations. The BENN teams are instructed to act as mediators between different groups of inhabitants in their respective neighbourhoods as well as between the inhabitants and the respective administration. This is fostered by discursive interaction which is said to be the basis for planning practice that aims to act in public interest (Mill, 1951). The BENN teams are asked to listen to neighbourhood inhabitants, with special attention to subordinated groups. This process is very close to what communicative planning aims to do. To achieve the goal of activating individuals and organisations in the neighbourhood, the programme institutionalised a neighbourhood forum and a resident’s council in each neighbourhood. The neighbourhood forum serves as a platform for meeting and exchange for the whole neighbourhood. Here it is discussed what people regard as important and decide together about foci of action. Another central element of the BENN programme is the “activation and integration of the shelters residents” (SenSW, 2021, p. 3) through a residents’ council. A few people aim to serve as representatives for the whole shelter, as well as formulate needs and ideas to improve the quality of life in the accommodation. Postmigrant spatial justice with a focus on equality would address the unequal access to urban resources, through the redistribution of resources or through paying attention to questions of representation and decision-making processes (Marcuse, 2009). The BENN programme aims to address the latter through the neighbourhood forum and the residents’ council. However, the distribution of project funds is exclusively decided upon within a steering group, consisting the area coordinator of the SenSW, the district and the respective BENN team. Thus, people in the neigh-

bourhoods have no direct influence on the allocation of project funds.

5.2. Structural and Institutional Embeddedness

A closer look at the funding structure of the BENN programme can reveal the urban social policy context within which it is located. Parts of the programme are funded by the Investment Pact for Social Integration in the Neighbourhood (Investitionspakt Soziale Integration im Quartier). Between 2017 and 2020, the federal government provided 200 million euros annually to create spaces for education and encounter through the promotion of construction measures (Federal Ministry of the Interior, Building and Community, 2021). The remaining funding is provided by the Social Cohesion programme (until 2019 Social City programme) which is part of the German *Städtebauförderung* (Urban Development Funding). The Social City/Cohesion programme was implemented to address particularly disadvantaged neighbourhoods through the allocation of funding in the residential environment since 1999. One of the central contradictions is the addressing of social problems through interventions in the built structures (Walther, 2001). Berlin came up with a different interpretation as it implemented the neighbourhood management programme with interdisciplinary teams working in local offices to introduce participation concepts and activate the local population (Quartiersmanagement Berlin, 2021). Likewise, the BENN programme is particular to Berlin in its interpretation of the Investment Pact for Social Integration in the Neighbourhood. Moreover, the BENN programme adopts many of the structures established in the Berlin neighbourhood management programme, like the local teams, the steering group, the decision structures for the inhabitants, and many more. It is the Senate Department for Urban Development and Housing that is responsible for both, the Social City programme and the BENN programme. That is insofar surprising as at least for BENN with its focus on refugees, the Senate Department for Integration, Labour and Social Affairs would be expected to run such a programme. In Berlin, the Senate Department for Integration, Labour and Social Affairs generally deals with migrant topics and runs the State Office for Refugee Affairs (Landesamt für Flüchtlingsangelegenheiten [LAF]). The LAF was established as a result of the administrative collapse of the Berlin State Office for Health and Social Affairs in 2015/16. The main areas of responsibility include the reception of refugees as well as the provision of monetary and in-kind benefits, health and illness benefits as well as the provision of housing including the construction of new buildings. Issues around refugee shelters frame the intersection of LAF and BENN. The same Senate Department enacted the Law on the Regulation of Participation and Integration in Berlin (PartIntG) in 2010 as the first federal state to legally regulate participation structures and to promote and enforce equal

participation of people with a migration history in Berlin. The law was evaluated in 2019 and is now being revised. One of the main revisions reframes migration and conceptualises a migration society in combination with the elimination of the term 'integration' and the recognition of people who are affected by discrimination and who are attributed a migration background (field notes, October 2020). However, the connections of the BENN programme to the Senate Department for Integration, Labour and Social Affairs and the LAF remain marginal. Moreover, the experience and long-standing knowledge of institutions in the field of migration including civil society and migrant organisations, have not conceptually enhanced the BENN programme.

5.3. *BENN in the Context of Postmigrant Spatial Justice*

5.3.1. Ambivalences Caused by Socio-Spatial Division

The underlying and guiding assumption of the BENN programme is that neighbourhoods with large refugee shelters (like deprived neighbourhoods) cause instability and problems far beyond the very place, and therefore need to adopt external stabilising elements. In this sense, the BENN programme addresses socio-spatial divisions that primarily derive from the principal accommodation and spatial separation of people within the asylum-seeking process. Without these mass accommodations, the BENN programme would not exist. This form of accommodation as involuntary clustering is a major form of spatial injustice (Marcuse, 2009, p. 3). However, the BENN programme also allows for a dedication of governmental funds to detect general conditions and specific problems in refugee shelters. Usually, non-governmental organisations and politically motivated groups have drawn attention to deficiencies in the shelters. State actors usually have little resources to address problems directly related to the refugee shelter, such as a change of operator, or the regular exchange of residences as one BENN manager explains. She illustrates how the allotment garden association developed an area at their disposal together with the refugee shelter through BENN. "Even if this is not altruistic," she says:

They would not have thought that far ahead. Through BENN the refugee shelters have certainly slipped into focus from time to time, which they would not have been otherwise. And that, I think, is quite a lot that such a programme can achieve. (I9 interview BENN manager)

One BENN team initiated their work even before the refugee shelter was built and could therefore run actions and information campaigns about the shelter beforehand. The BENN manager explains that the programme has worked with those, who live in flats or who meet in the community centre (I7 interview BENN manager). Here, another controversial point becomes obvious. The

programme aims to especially activate people in shelters, who are often undergoing the asylum-seeking process. Since the accommodation of the people undergoing the process keeps changing, they have fragile ties to their local area, and their primary need is to find independent housing. This might be one reason why the participation of refugees remains quite low in the BENN activities, which the BENN teams repeatedly mention (various interviews and field notes).

5.3.2. Imagined Groups

Building on the SINUS milieus, the BENN programme works with the so-called "migrant milieus." In general, the milieu approach describes differences in the society with the intention to capture structures of inequality (Burzan, 2011, p. 89). The study of lifestyles is closely linked to the interests of market research, which aims to find out the typical consumption styles in each case by determining the milieus (Burzan, 2011, p. 105). Since 2008, the milieu research has been transferred to the so-called migrant population. In contrast to the general Sinus model, not only social situation, life phase or national origin were recorded, but also basic values, attitude patterns, and specific needs in everyday life (for an overview of the different milieus see Hallenberg, 2018, p. 8). The BENN teams are required to figure out what milieus are predominant and develop respective activation strategies. For example, it is suggested that if there is a large concentration of 'precarious' people in the neighbourhood, they should be addressed in an approachable, non-judgmental, and not pitying or lecturing manner, and that anglicisms and foreign words should be avoided (Kuder & Schaal, 2019, p. 13). 'Consumer hedonists,' in contrast, should be visited in pubs or gyms, "playful elements," "charm offensives," and "cool neighbourhood celebrities" can contribute to their activation, but a certain volatility should always be expected (Kuder & Schaal, 2019, p. 14). These labels and group affiliation are externally ascribed. Individuals are neither able to choose their group, nor are they able to change the label. Especially when group affiliations become fixed or stable, and when people have little possibilities to move between those different milieus, there is a danger of stereotypical stigmatisation (Burzan, 2011, p. 123). Furthermore, the coexistence of horizontal groups does not reveal existing power relations and asymmetries (Erdem, 2013, p. 101), combined with the danger of legitimising the existing order of inequality (Meyer, 2001, p. 265). In addition, the BENN programme juggles with another dimension of imagined groups. One of the main objectives the BENN programme that is frequently stressed is the activation of "old" and "new" neighbours through encounters and joint actions (SenSW, 2021, p. 1). Initially, the programme has the potential to overcome this binary by addressing the neighbourhood and its needs instead of a group. However, the constant emphasis of the binary "old" and "new" neighbours

contributes not only to the imagination that such a group exists in reality, it also reinforces the discourse between 'we' and 'the other.' Although this has been reflected by some BENN teams, there is little room for discussion and no general questioning of the categories.

5.3.3. Redistribution Issues

A third ambiguity points to the promotion of the neighbourhood as a place of encounter and as a resource for forms of capital. BENN is not intended to address structural participation measures (like the facilitation of access to housing education and labour market), but it is assumed that resources can be made available in the local context:

Because it is said that structural integration processes probably run better when there is contact between these two groups. Someone who manages to get into German networks at a relatively early stage and who manages to establish friendships is assumed to have more information and contacts resulting in faster access to housing and work. (I2 BENN manager)

In this sense, the teams organise festivals, language classes, cooking and sporting events, and secure participation through the various formats. But the resources of everyday life for refugees and asylum seekers are not necessarily located in the vicinity of the refugee shelter. People in shelters are often relocated between shelters, between cities, some may be even deported or sent to other countries. Their objective is to leave the shelter and find a space for their own. In addition, children sometimes keep staying in schools in districts where they were previously accommodated resulting in long distances commuting. Another big issue is connected to the provision of special food needs:

We have heard from some women that they [travel 20 minutes one way] every day because, the shelters [only] have a mini fridge. And having a big family [requires] having to buy halal meat [and] there are no Halal products here [locally]. (I10 BENN manager)

Consequently, networks and friendships are spread at least all over Berlin, but more likely over borders of cities and nations. In this respect, it is questionable if it is really the near surrounding from which resources and forms of capital can be gained. And if so, what exactly can be provided by the neighbourhood? This question is especially relevant for neighbourhoods with scarce resources, i.e., with not enough spots in schools and kindergartens, with a lack of competent teachers and pedagogics, with an inadequate provision of health care services and with generally little public funding available. Resentment and frustrations are the consequence then, as one BENN manager describes:

What I often encounter is this case: We are so neglected here and live out our existence with Hartz IV [unemployment benefit] or with bad jobs and then the refugees come and that is where the millions are put in. And that is frustrating. (I18 BENN manager)

To activate something where there are few resources is thus another important limitation evident in the work of the BENN programme.

6. Postmigrant Spatial Justice: A Utopian Project?

Spatial justice is a demand when at least two bodies move into one space and justice is reached, when all interests are mutually satisfied. In this sense, it is a utopian vision of a not yet reached socio-spatial configuration. In a similar vein, the concept of postmigration demands a shift in perspective on how migration is perceived and positioned within society. A transformation towards postmigrant spatial justice in the context of equality, diversity and democracy is permeated by tensions and internal contradictions. The question arises: Which norm is more prevalent and which aspects of postmigrant spatial justice remain rather weak? The BENN programme introduced in this article is a participation policy for refugees and other inhabitants. The view into history reveals that there is a potential for shifts towards a postmigrant conception of society. However, this is not equally applicable for all individuals, but it varies with the different status. This signals rather an inclusion of certain groups than a shift in perspective. If society keeps framing refugees as the 'refugee other,' then migration is still placed on the periphery. The BENN teams act as a mediator between the different groups in the neighbourhood as well as between the inhabitants and the administration. Here, the BENN teams follow the direction of communicative planning as deliberative democracy. However, structural inequality and hierarchies of power are almost completely concealed. Within the BENN framework, individuals do not have the same status, in contrary. There is a huge hierarchy in combination with different rights and possibilities of access between the different groups. Moreover, people have very different goals and needs in terms of everyday life: For some, the highest priority is to leave the shelter and move into flats while others are already able to live in flats and have other priorities. Without dissolving these spatial formations, the 'refugee other' keeps being othered through spatial practices, even when being socially more included. What this article therefore reveals is that no matter how transformative a policy may be it is nevertheless embedded in and dependent from broader structures. Even if the BENN programme was designed in a completely postmigrant spatial justice manner, it is embedded in the structures that separate refugees from other people through laws, policies, and through the socio-spatial separation in shelters. Although the programme cannot address structural inequalities, it could

have incorporated experts from migrant organisations and from other Senate Departments, districts administrations and civil society organisations in the creation of the programme as well as in the decision making for the allocation of project funds. Furthermore, the programme could have been more emancipated from the Social City programme. Although the structure has proven to be sustainable for 20 years, the context in which BENN operates is slightly different and therefore needs different foci of attention. BENN has come up with several instruments to activate and involve inhabitants in decision making and the distribution of project funds. However, as democracy can only evolve under the background condition of equality—and equality cannot be achieved within the scope of the programme—these instruments are most likely deemed to fail. The stereotypical and potentially stigmatising use of milieus is not contributing to an understanding of a postmigration society. The BENN teams have raised these issues themselves, but little space and resources have been made available to address the role of BENN in co-constituting differentiating and excluding notions of society. A transformative postmigrant and just policy therefore needs to consider the various logics of exclusion, discrimination, and racism inherent in society. Finally, if the programme continues beyond 2021, the experience and knowledge of the previous years should be considered, not replacing old BENN teams with new ones. Nevertheless, despite all this critique, the BENN programme has proven to be a progressive emancipation from the federal policy, it allocates state funding to focus on problems related to spatial injustice of refugee shelters and it aims for the participation of inhabitants and establish networks to achieve social cohesion. After all, the BENN programme opens many debates about postmigration and spatial justice rather than answering them, and there are many points of discussion and analysis for further research.

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Conflict of Interests

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About the Author



Sylvana Jahre is a Research Associate at the Department of Geography, Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin, Germany, as well as a Research Assistant in the MAPURBAN research project at the Institute of Geographical Science, Free University Berlin. She is associated with the collaborative Research Centre CRC 1265 “Re-Figuration of Spaces” at Technische Universität (TU) Berlin. Her research interests lie at the intersection of critical urban studies, reflexive migration studies, and postcolonial science and technology studies.